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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 24 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the latest of a number of recent violations of the Blue Line from Lebanese territory which continue to threaten civilian lives and cause damage to residential communities in northern Israel.

On Monday, 21 July 2003, Hizbullah terrorists fired missiles across the Blue Line from Lebanon, injuring three civilians in the northern Israeli town of Shlomi and causing shock and terror among the local population. The shrapnel also hit a school, causing some damage. Following the attack, a senior Hizbollah member was reported to threaten that such acts against the residents of Northern Israel would continue.

This incident serves to once again illustrate that in spite of Israeli withdrawal three years ago in full and confirmed compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), the Government of Lebanon persists in refusing to live up to its obligations under the norms of international law and the provisions of resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1310 (2000), 1337 (2001) and 1373 (2001), which call for the restoration of international peace and security, the return of the effective authority and presence of the Government of Lebanon in the south, and the prevention of cross-border attacks from a state's territory.

Indeed, rather than acting to fulfil its international obligations, the Government of Lebanon has effectively relinquished control of South Lebanon to Hizbollah, a terrorist organization that has supported and perpetrated numerous terrorist actions, both in the Middle East and beyond. The recent incidents testify, yet again, to the fact that were Lebanon to simply meet the obligations required of all States to prevent their territory from serving as a base for terrorist attacks, tensions in the area would be immeasurably defused and Israeli measures of self-defence would be unnecessary.

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In the light of the impending renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the publication of the report of the Secretary-General on this issue (S/2003/728), it is incumbent upon the international community to make clear to Lebanon and Syria, the power-broker and the occupying force in that country, that it will not tolerate continued support for illegal cross-border attacks that jeopardize international peace and security. The time has come for Lebanon to live up to its obligations under international law and Security Council resolutions, to assume effective control over its territory, and to prevent acts of terrorism like any responsible state.

The present letter is a follow-up to previous letters concerning the dangerous situation in South Lebanon caused by the illegal attacks perpetrated by Hizbullah across the Blue Line.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Dan **Gillerman**
Permanent Representative